

Jennifer M. Capitolo

Senior Policy Advisor | Sacramento

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For almost 15 years, Jennifer Capitolo has been assisting clients with a wide range of advocacy issues including water, infrastructure development, transportation, housing and healthcare. She has developed strong relationships with the Governor, legislators, state agency heads, and staff. On behalf of clients she has successfully helped pass numerous legislative and regulatory proposals, as well as stopped or delayed troublesome legislation and regulations. Jennifer works with her clients to build a governmental relations strategy and program that includes policy analysis, policy advocacy, coalition development and stakeholder engagement.

Jennifer is one of a select few legislative advocates in Sacramento who understands the state agency funding programs. She has helped secure hundreds of millions of dollars in state and federal funding for water infrastructure, parks, higher education, museums and libraries, transportation projects, and infill and transit-oriented developments throughout California. Her largest funding achievement to date was nearly \$300 million from the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) from the State's Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program to complete the extension of the Foothill Gold Line from Glendora to Montclair.

Jennifer currently serves as the lead government affairs representative for the California Water Association. In that role she represents public water utilities that are regulated by the Public Utilities Commission with the Governor, legislature and state agencies. She also sits on the water committee of the California Foundation on the Environment and Economy and participated in the California Water Education Foundation's 2015 Water Leaders fellowship program for water policy professionals around the state. Additionally, she is on the Policy Advisory Council for Imagine H2O, a nonprofit organization that empowers people to deploy and develop innovation to solve water challenges globally.

Her experience in state government includes serving as a senior field representative for former Assemblymember and Senator Ellen Corbett (D - Hayward), and as a budget analyst in the Department of Finance under former Governor Gray Davis. Jennifer also maintains close relationships with decision makers at the federal level from her work as a district representative for Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D - Oakland).

EXPERIENCE

California Water Association (CWA). Serves as the lead government affairs representative for CWA, a statewide association of water utilities that are regulated by the Public Utilities Commission. Jennifer provides real-time political and legislative updates to the members of CWA, develops strategies for achieving legislative priorities, drafts advocacy materials, secures meetings with legislators, administration officials and staff, and testifies at legislative

hearings. In 2014, Jennifer worked with the state legislature to ensure that all customers of public water utilities have the opportunity to benefit from State Water Bond funding. Early drafts of the water bond excluded certain types of public water utilities from eligibility. Access to these water bond funds will result in lower water rates for all public water utility customers. In 2016, Jennifer assisted Senator Cathleen Galgiani (D-Stockton) with a bill to allow customers of water utilities regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to benefit from the loan forgiveness program under the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program. In 2019, Jennifer sponsored a bill with Assemblyman Jim Patterson (R-Fresno) to clarify the CPUC's obligations to audit or review the books of water utilities that it regulates. This bill was in direct response to a State Auditor's report from 2018 that found that the CPUC wasn't fully meeting its obligations to audit water utilities. This bill compliments updated audit policies and procedures implemented by the CPUC.

Central Basin Water Association (CBWA). Advances the legislative advocacy goals of CBWA, an association of 44 water suppliers (cities, mutual water companies, and regulated utilities) in an area that overlies the central groundwater basin in Los Angeles County. CBWA members provide domestic water service to nearly one million residents. In 2016, on behalf of CBWA, Jennifer provided technical assistance to the legislature on two bills, SB 953 and AB 1794, which significantly changed the governance structure of the Central Basin Municipal Water District, a water wholesaler in southeast Los Angeles County, which provides imported water to many members of CBWA.

Yolo County. Drafted a successful grant application to the U.S. Economic Development Administration to relocate rail service in the County of Yolo to increase economic benefits and create jobs. Coordinated and sought consensus with multiple public agencies in the development and submission of the application.

Olivenhain Municipal Water District (OMWD). Provides legislative lobbying and funding advocacy services OMWD, a public agency providing water, wastewater, recycled water, hydroelectricity and recreational opportunities in North San Diego County to over 86,000 customers. In 2017, Jennifer assisted OMWD with a grant application for \$650,000 for the San Dieguito Valley Brackish Groundwater Desalination Design Pilot. In 2017, Jennifer lobbied for a set aside of funds for water districts in the parks/water bond, SB 5.

Cities of Arcata, Fortuna and County of Humboldt in Partnership with DANCO Communities. Working with DANCO Communities, Nossaman has secured nearly \$10 million in grant funding for affordable housing development projects in the County of Humboldt and the Cities of Arcata and Fortuna. These funds will create new housing opportunities for low-income families and seniors in rural California.

Elite Energy. Drafted a successful application for \$40 million in tax exempt bond financing for anaerobic digester facilities to be located throughout the Central Valley and that will assist in reducing dairy-related greenhouse gas emissions.

INSIGHTS

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Co-Presenter, "Surf's Up or Low Tide? California's Water Sector: 2019 in Review & 2020 Predictions," Nossaman's 2019 Water Webinar Series, 12.10.2019

Speaker, "2019 State Legislative Update and Immediate Funding Opportunities," Nossaman's 2019 California Coastal Law Conference, Huntington Beach, CA, 09.10.2019

Moderator, "The 2019 Legislative Session - OMG," California Water Association's 2019 Spring Conference, Sacramento, CA, 05.23.2019

Speaker, "2018 CBWA Quarterly Membership Meeting," Central Basin Water Association's Quarterly Membership Meeting, Downey, CA, 11.01.2018

Moderator, "Making Right and Easy Choices in the 2018 Legislative Session (We Should Be So Lucky)," California Water Association's 2018 Spring Conference, Sacramento, CA, 05.17.2018

Speaker, "2018 Legislative Activities," San Gabriel Valley Water Association Quarterly Meeting, Pomona, CA, 05.16.2018

Speaker, "The Murky World of Water Policy Made Clear," Nossaman Webinar, 06.21.2017

HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

Named to *Sacramento Business Journal's* 40 Under 40 list, 2014

Selected for the California Water Education Foundation's Water Leaders Fellowship, 2015

COMMUNITY & PROFESSIONAL

Sacramento Outreach Coordinator, Emerge California

Founding Member, Bridgeway Play

Founding Member, Fem Dems

Policy Advisory Council, Imagine H2O

Member, Capitol Network

Member, California Women Lead

Member, Institute of Government Advocates

Member, League of Women Voters

Member, National Women's Political Caucus

PRACTICES

Government Relations & Regulation

California Advocacy

Water Law

INDUSTRIES

Energy & Utilities

Water

EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley, M.A., 2003

Colorado State University, B.S., 2000